

Behavioral Disorders and Their Influence on Women's Kabbadi Achievements

Deepika¹ & Singh, Balvinder²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Physical Education & Sports, NIILM University Kaithal,
Haryana, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Physical Education & Sports, NIILM University Kaithal,
Haryana, India

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70388/ijabs250154>

Received on May 06, 2025

Accepted on June 15, 2025

Published on Sep18, 2025

This article is licensed under a
license [Commons Attribution-
Non-commercial-No
Derivatives 4.0 International
Public License \(CC BY-NC-ND\)](#)

Abstract

Mental health issues are prevalent among athletes, with approximately 35% of top-tier athletes struggling with concerns such as exhaustion, depression, and anxiety. Despite their physical prowess, athletes face unique pressures that increase their susceptibility to psychological disorders, including intense training schedules, competitive pressure, and personal obligations. Common mental health challenges in athletic populations include depression, eating disorders, substance misuse, sleep issues, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Various factors influence the rate of mental health disorders in athletes, such as personality traits, gender, sexual misconduct, hazing, bullying, injury, illness, concussions, and overtraining syndrome. The susceptibility to mental health challenges varies among athletes at different stages, including youth, collegiate, professional, and post-retirement. Recognizing the signs of mental health issues in athletes is crucial, and a holistic approach involving coaches, athletic trainers, and family members is necessary to support athletes' mental well-being. Strategies for promoting athletes' psychological health include creating a supportive team environment, emphasizing balance, promoting mental health literacy, encouraging open communication, developing self-care plans, and

speaking up about personal challenges. Common treatments for athlete mental health include performance psychology, psychotherapy, cognitive behavior therapy, motivational enhancement therapy, psychodynamic therapy, medication, group therapy, and couple's/family therapy. Destigmatizing athlete mental health requires establishing a strong support network within sports communities and fostering an atmosphere of understanding and assistance.

Keywords: Depression, Eating disorders, Substance Misuse, Sleep issues, Anxiety, OCD, and Attention-deficit.

Introduction

Although athletes are often praised for their physical prowess, their rigorous demands can substantially affect their psychological health. In recent years, there has been growing acknowledgment of the significance of athletes' mental well-being among healthcare professionals, sports organizations, and the general public. However, a combination of factors, including personal characteristics, intense training schedules, and competitive pressure, can lead to psychological difficulties for individuals in this field.

Prevalence of Mental Health Disorders among Athletes

Mental health issues can affect individuals in all walks of life. Athletes, despite their physical prowess, are not immune to psychological challenges. Infact, they may be at higher risk of developing mental health disorders.

Research conducted in 2019 revealed that approximately 35% of top-tier athletes struggled with mental health concerns. The most common reported issues were exhaustion, depression, and anxiety. Athletes often work under extreme stress, facing unrealistic demands from various sources, including coaches, supporters, fellow team members, and their own internal expectations. This constant striving for excellence significantly impacts mental wellbeing.

Many athletes grapple with juggling personal obligations and athletic commitments. For example, those participating in school sports must maintain a satisfactory academic performance while fulfilling their team responsibilities. Although mental health problems can emerge at any point in a person's life, athletes frequently encounter unique pressures that may increase their susceptibility to psychological disorders.

Mental Health Challenges Prevalent in Athletic Populations

Athletes may encounter a range of psychological difficulties throughout their sporting careers. As an illustration, when an athlete is forced to retire due to an injury, they are likely to experience emotions such as sadness or potentially develop depression.

Common mental health concerns for athletes include the following.

1. **Depression:** Contrary to popular beliefs, new studies indicate that athletes are not immune to depression. The misconception that sports participants are less susceptible to depressive states stems from the belief that physical activity promotes happiness and triggers the release of mood-enhancing endorphins. However, research has demonstrated that individuals engaged in sports are equally likely to experience depression as are non-athletes.

For example, those involved in athletic pursuits face unique challenges that may contribute to depression, including injuries, excessive training, forced retirement from sports, and unrealistic performance demands.

The signs of depression to watch out in athletes include the following:

- Increased irritability
 - Withdrawn
 - Lack of motivation
 - Loss of interest in sports
 - Social isolation
 - Changes in eating
 - Irregular sleep patterns.
2. **Eating Disorders:** Many athletes, particularly those in certain sports, adopt extreme dietary habits or exercise routines to manage their weight. The three common eating disorders that affect athletes are anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating. Female athletes are more prone to develop eating disorders, especially those who are unhappy with their physical appearance. Sports related stereotypes can also contribute to disordered eating behavior. For instance, there is the misconception that runners and swimmers must be exceptionally thin to excel in their respective sports. In some sports teams, coaches may

in advertently encourage people with eating disorders. They might praise athletes who diet, lose weight, or engage in intense training, labeling them as "dedicated" team members. Many student athletes are reluctant to seek treatment for eating disorders, and fear may negatively affect their competitive performance.

3. **Substance Misuse:** Athletes often turn to substance abuse for various reasons, with one primary motivation being the desire to gain a competitive edge. Many competitors have resorted to steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs to boost their speed and strength. Despite efforts by anti-doping organizations to curb the use of illicit substances, some compounds continue to evade detection methods. Another significant issue in the athletic community is the misuse of pain medication. Athletes frequently sustain injuries, leading them to rely on narcotics for pain management. Even after recovery, individuals may struggle to discontinue opioid use and develop a dependence on these drugs. The problem of painkiller abuse extends beyond active athletes to those who retire from professional sports. Research has shown that former NFL players are four times more likely to misuse opioids than the general population.
4. **Sleep Issues:** Studies have indicated that approximately 25% of athletes experience sleep-related problems. Inadequate sleep negatively affects an individual's athletic performance and concentration abilities. Various factors in sports can lead to sleep difficulties, including:
 - High training loads
 - Early morning training
 - Late night training
 - Sports- related travel
 - Competition anxiety
 - Concussions are prevalent and recurring injuries that can result in sleep-related problems. These traumatic brain injuries are frequently observed in contact sports including football, ice hockey, wrestling, and rugby. Anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances are among the mental health concerns associated with concussion are anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances.
5. **Anxiety:** The NCAA reports that 85% of athletic trainers consider anxiety in student athletes a significant issue. Many athletes experience performance-related anxiety or

broader anxiety disorders. Anxiety manifests in various mental and physical symptoms. The following are typical indicators of anxiety.

- Feelings of powerlessness
- A strong sense of impending doom
- Increased heart rate
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Shortness of breath

6. **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:** A recent investigation published in the American Journal of Psychiatry revealed that Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is more prevalent among college athletes than was previously thought. While the expected OCD rate in the general population was 2.3%, researchers discovered that the actual percentage among college athletes was 5.2%, which is more than twice the anticipated figure. Individuals with OCD, including athletes, experience intrusive thoughts that result in compulsive behaviors. For example, an athlete might believe they will incur a major injury during a competition if they do not perform a specific set of ritualistic actions before each game, such as donning their equipment in a particular order or repeatedly verifying that their locker is secured before departing the locker room. OCD symptoms can be highly distressing and may become incapacitating if left untreated.
7. **Attention- Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder:** ADHD is prevalent in both athletic and nonathletic populations. Nevertheless, athletes with these conditions require specific consideration. Medications prescribed for ADHD management may increase body temperature, potentially elevating the risk of training-related health issues or injuries. Furthermore, athletes dealing with ADHD might face challenges when confronted with high performance expectations in sports, particularly when coupled with rigorous academic demands. It is important to note that not all athletes with ADHD receive an official diagnosis. Consequently, it is crucial for sports medicine experts and coaches to be vigilant about potential ADHD symptoms. Characteristic signs of ADHD include difficulty in multitasking, inefficient time management, lack of organization, trouble prioritizing, in ability to concentrate on tasks, fidgetiness, and poor planning abilities.

Factors Influencing Mental Health in Athletes

A combination of personality, cultural, and environmental factors influence the rate of mental health disorders in athletes.

1. **Personality:** Successful athletes often exhibit personality traits that contribute to their achievements. Specific characteristics frequently enable them to excel in a competitive environment. Nevertheless, these qualities may increase the susceptibility to mental health issues.

Research shows that athletes tend to be as follows:

- Hardworking
- Persistent
- Committed
- Intelligent
- Able to have a high level of self-control
- Achievement-oriented
- Good decision-makers

Traditionally, tenacity and industriousness are regarded as desirable attributes. Nevertheless, these qualities can cause athletes to impose undue stress on them. The relentless expectation of delivering peak performance and adhering to grueling training schedules may contribute to heightened anxiety.

The pursuit of flawlessness, which is often demanded in team sports, can yield adverse outcomes. When individuals are excessively preoccupied with their performance, the resulting tension can impair their capabilities. Athletes who fall short of expectations may experience a diminished sense of self-worth, exacerbating their apprehension about potential failure.

2. **Gender and Sexual Misconduct:** The 2022 NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being study highlighted a concerning trend: female athletes reported higher levels of mental exhaustion, sadness, and anxiety than their male counterparts. Concurrently, suicide rates among female athletes have shown an alarming increase in recent years. A tragic illustration of this issue occurred in 2022 when five female NCAA athletes took their

own lives. Investigations into these cases often reveal that injuries and escalating pressure play significant roles in athletes' decisions. The mental health challenges faced by athletes are further compounded by the issues of sexual misconduct and harassment. While athletes of all genders are vulnerable to such behavior from both coaches and teammates, research suggests that person sports teams are more likely to engage in acts of sexual misconduct than are coaches. The severity of abuse can vary, but studies have indicated that higher levels of athletic competition correlate with an increased risk of sexual misconduct.

3. **Hazing and Bullying:** Initiation rituals involving abuse, known as hazing, can significantly impact an athlete's psychological well-being in both the short and long terms. These practices often include dangerous activities such as the rapid consumption of large quantities of alcohol. Beyond mental health risks, hazing endangers an individual's physical safety. Such rituals may lead to injuries that prematurely end careers and negatively affect athletic performance. In sports, both coaches and teammates can engage in bullying behaviors that can manifest in various ways and have enduring effects. Athletes who experience bullying often feel ostracized, alone, and suffer from diminished self-worth. The psychological toll of bullying in sports can result in conditions such as depression, anxiety, or acute stress disorders.
4. **Injury and Illness:** Experiencing an injury or illness can be challenging for anyone, but athletes often face unique pressures to recover swiftly and resume their sporting activities. When a severe injury prevents an athlete from returning to their sport, it can lead to a sense of identity loss. Moreover, injuries may trigger underlying mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. The risks of substance abuse increase among injured athletes, who may attempt to self-medicate to expedite their recovery. Furthermore, athletes who deal with injuries are more susceptible to developing disordered eating habits. They might drastically reduce their food intake because of feelings of unworthiness stemming from their injured state.
5. **Concussions:** Athletes face significant dangers from concussions. Research from 2014 indicates that between 1.6 and 3.8 million concussions occur annually in the United States. Male athletes are at a higher risk in sports such as American football, rugby, wrestling, and ice hockey. For females, basketball and soccer had greater concussion risks. Typical symptoms of concussion include light headedness, head pain, vomiting,

disorientation, memory loss, equilibrium problems, and cognitive deficits. These injuries have been associated with mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. While most individuals recover from concussions over time, repeated incidents can result in chronic post-concussion syndrome and neurological degeneration. Recently, increased focus has been placed on chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain condition found in individuals who have experienced multiple head impacts. Contact sports, particularly American football, are the main cause of CTE. Although many symptoms are similar to those of concussions, CTE symptoms typically appear years or even decades after brain trauma occurs or after an individual ceases participation in contact sports.

6. **Overtraining Syndrome:** In the realm of competitive sports, athletes may assume that increasing their training regimen is advantageous. However, even robust athletic physiques are limited by the stress they can withstand. When athletes push their training beyond their body's recuperative abilities and fail to allow sufficient rest, they may develop overtraining syndrome (OTS). Although the precise mechanisms of OTS remain unclear, it is theorized that inadequate rest and recovery force the body into a state of survival. Under these conditions, various bodily systems adapt to the hostile environments created by excessive stress and insufficient recuperation. These adaptations, intended to maintain basic life functions, result in changes affecting the immune system, nervous system, muscles, metabolism, and the psychological state. Athletes experiencing OTS typically reach a performance plateau, followed by a decline. The syndrome manifests as symptoms such as exhaustion, altered eating patterns, muscle discomfort, low mood, and impaired focus. Treatment strategies for individuals with OTS are tailored to each case but often incorporate rest periods, psychological counseling, and the use of antidepressant medications.

Considering Age in Athletes' Mental Health

Consequently, it is crucial to examine mental health in relation to athletes' age. The susceptibility to mental health challenges varies among athletes at different stages, including youth, collegiate, professional, and post-retirement stages.

Youth

The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that participating in youth sports provides numerous mental health advantages such as enhanced sleep patterns, improved interpersonal skills, increased focus, and heightened self-esteem. Nevertheless, young athletes often experience stress and anxiety because of fear of not meeting their expectations. The risks of anxiety, eating disorders, and depression escalate as competition intensifies. The early recruitment practices of college and professional teams may overwhelm many high school students who are unprepared for the demanding nature of their athletic experience.

Approximately 57% of high school students engage in at least one type of sport. These high school athletic programs typically involve more rigorous training and practice schedules than recreational youth leagues do, and the level of competition is generally higher. Thus, the physical and mental demands of teenagers can be taxed.

Over 60% of the student athletes reported experiencing moderate-to-severe stress levels. This stress impacts various aspects of students' lives, including athletic performance. High School athletes often conceal their feelings of stress and anxiety, and rarely seek professional mental health assistance.

College

In the past, regulations prohibited college athletes from profiting financially from participating in school sports. However, the introduction of NIL (name, image, likeness) agreements in 2021 has intensified the demands on both collegiate athletes and high school recruits.

Currently, college athletes have the opportunity to secure endorsement contracts worth six figures or more. The potential for lucrative deals creates an additional source of stress. In addition, college athletes continue to face pressure to excel in their sports and maintain the academic standards necessary for eligibility. The demands of games and training sessions often result in missed classes, requiring students to exert extra effort to keep up with their studies. The NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being study indicated that since 2020, there has been a sustained increase in feelings of depression, hopelessness, and mental fatigue among student athletes.

Professional

In recent years, prominent athletes have garnered significant attention to emphasize the

importance of their mental well-being. For instance, in 2021, tennis player Naomi Osaka opted out of French Open, citing mental health concerns. Similarly, the gymnast Simone Biles chose to skip certain competitions to safeguard their psychological state. When these high-profile sports figures openly discuss their personal mental health struggles, they reduce the stigma associated with such experiences.

Professional sports impose intense performance demands on athletes. Given that these individuals earn a living through their athletic abilities, they are expected to consistently deliver exceptional results over extended periods of time. Often, teammates, coaching staff, and supporters have unreasonable expectations for professional athletes. They rarely afford time off, and are anticipated to bounce back swiftly from injuries. Additionally, many pro-athletes may feel compelled to continually demonstrate the importance of maintaining their positions within their respective teams.

Retirement and Older Adulthood

The age at which athletes retire varies based on their sports' physical requirements, but generally occurs much earlier than in other professions. This transition can be emotionally challenging for athletes as their identity is often closely tied to athletic performance. Throughout their careers, athletes recognize their skills and find fulfillment in utilizing their talents. Moreover, professional athletes typically lead highly structured lives, with schedules managed by coaches, trainers, and managers.

Upon retirement, athletes often face the need to acquire new skills or to view their sports from different angles. Adapting to this new phase of life and adjusting their values and priorities requires time. Similar to all individuals, aging athletes experience physical changes, including diminished strength, stamina, and speed. This decline can be particularly difficult for athletes who have spent most of their lives focusing on peak performance and are no longer able to achieve their previous results.

Physical appearance changes can also be challenging for retired athletes, as they may struggle to accept the weight gain, reduced muscle mass, and decreased stature associated with aging. During retirement, athletes are particularly susceptible to health issues, such as cognitive impairment and osteoarthritis. They also face a higher risk of developing mental health problems including depression, substance addiction, eating disorders, and anxiety.

Studies indicate that the level of control an athlete has over their retirement significantly

impacts their ability to adapt to the situation. Those who plan for retirement tend to fare better than those forced to retire because of injury or performance changes.

Research has shown that athletes who maintain well-rounded, balanced lives throughout their careers adjust to retirement more easily. To facilitate this transition, programs and trainers can encourage athletes to broaden their interests and values, prepare for specific health concerns, and plan for retirement throughout their athletic career.

Recognizing the Signs of Mental Health Issues in Athletes

The task of identifying mental health concerns involves coaches, athletic trainers, and family members. Although individuals may experience unique symptoms, there are certain common signs. Athletes facing challenges might display the following indicators.

- Sudden changes in behavior
- Increased irritability
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Decreased motivation
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Decline in athletic performance
- Negative self-talk
- Difficulty concentrating.

7. Tips for Supporting Athletes' Mental Health: A holistic approach is crucial for effectively addressing athletes' mental well-being, which requires involvement from all parties in their lives. Support for athletes should encompass the individual, team, and organizational dimensions. The following crucial tactics for promoting athletes' psychological health were explored:

1. Create a Supportive Team Environment: The mental health of athletes is significantly influenced by dynamics within their teams. Coaches and support staff must establish an inclusive and supportive environment for all team members. Maintaining connections with every athlete, including those sidelined because of injuries, is essential. To promote a sense of belonging, injured players should be included in team-bonding activities as much as

possible. Positive relationships among staff and team members can be cultivated through various team-building exercises. These may include retreats, scavenger hunts, group trivia games, and participation in community service projects, all of which provide opportunities for teammates to interact outside their usual athletic setting. When athletes feel a strong connection with their team, they are more likely to feel comfortable discussing their mental health concerns.

2. Emphasize Balance: For athletes, striking a balance between their professional and personal lives is essential for mental well-being. It is crucial that players establish clear distinctions between their athletic obligations and private affairs. Athletes should incorporate rest periods or breaks into their training regimens to facilitate both mental and physical recuperation. When coaches observe an athlete experiencing difficulties, they can inquire what the player needs to improve their state of mind. For example, athletes may require a hiatus from sports or an adjusted training program. Engaging in activities outside of sports, such as spending time with loved ones or pursuing other interests, can be beneficial for athletes. In addition, it is important for them to allocate time for relaxation.

3. Promote Mental Health Literacy: The pervasive social stigma surrounding mental disorders poses a significant barrier in addressing athletes' psychological health concerns. Many athletes are hesitant to discuss their mental well-being and fear the potential negative impacts on their careers. Combating this stigma requires widespread distribution of educational materials and online seminars to enhance awareness and comprehension of mental health issues. For student athletes, athletic trainers frequently serve as the primary point of contact to manage mental health concerns. These professionals are entrusted with the responsibility of providing team members with access to essential resources for seeking assistance. In certain situations, trainers or team physicians may recommend athletes to consult mental health specialists. If an athlete expresses any intention of self-harm or harm to others, trainers are obligated to immediately seek support from emergency services or crisis management professionals.

4. Elevate Open and Supportive Communication: Establishing an atmosphere of candid interaction is essential for safeguarding athletes' mental wellbeing. All team participants were at ease when conveying their sentiments. Team personnel should feel confident when alerting others to situations that could jeopardize athletes' mental health, such as initiation rituals or peer victimization. Coaching staff and administrators can endeavor to maintain

an approachable stance and receive instructions on effectively managing these issues. Periodic team gatherings should be integrated into an athletic calendar. Coaches can provide opportunities for athletes to recount their experiences and obtain support in secure settings. Before welcoming a new athlete to the squad, coaches can use a preliminary questionnaire to gauge their psychological state. These evaluations can inform staff about potential mental health vulnerabilities or the need for supplementary assistance regarding preexisting psychological diagnoses.

5. Encourage Education Programs: Mental health awareness programs should be integrated into athlete training in the early years. It is essential for the entire sports community, including coaches, support teams, and athletes themselves, to be equipped with the skills to identify mental health challenges and to be knowledgeable about the support systems in place. These initiatives foster an environment in which athletes can openly discuss their concerns and seek assistance, without fear of stigma. Although coaches and trainers can offer guidance on accessing mental health resources, they are not expected to provide treatment for psychological disorders. Their role is to connect athletes with appropriate mental health professionals who can offer specialized care and support.

- Clinical psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Licensed clinical social workers
- Psychiatric nurses
- Licensed mental health counselors
- Licensed family therapists
- Primary care physicians with training to treat mental health disorders.

6. Develop Self-Care Plans: Developing self-care plans is an effective approach for preserving mental well-being. Athletes can devise techniques that prioritize their overall wellness. Rather than concentrating on athletic training or academic pursuits, individuals can allocate a specific time each day to engage in relaxation activities. Examples of self-care practices include enjoying a book, writing in a journal, taking a stroll, engaging in conversations with friends, interacting with pets, practicing meditation, and enjoying music.

7. Speak Up: Even elite competitors face personal challenges and should be encouraged to recognize their own vulnerabilities. When renowned sports figures openly discuss their mental health issues, they can create a significant ripple effect, inspiring others to voice their concerns and seek assistance. Initiatives aimed at reducing stigma, such as McLean's Deconstructing Stigma campaign, often showcase the personal narratives of ordinary individuals who courageously share their experiences with mental health issues. Participants of such initiatives frequently cite their motivation to speak out as a desire to reassure others that they are not isolated in their struggles.

Common Treatments for Athlete Mental Health

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines mental health care for athletes as a comprehensive approach that considers athletic performance, emotional well-being, and the social aspects of sports participation. This holistic view extends to the examination of sports teams and organizations from a broad perspective.

Performance Psychology

Sports' training is valuable in performance psychology. This approach not only enhances athletes' on-field performance, but also cultivates the positive mental attributes necessary for success. The primary aim of performance psychology is to equip athletes with the ability to maintain composure under stress, sustain self-assurance, and manage various situations through cognitive skill development. Performance psychology incorporates various exercises, including:

- Visualization techniques
- Goal setting
- Mindfulness
- Positive self-talk.
- Relaxation techniques

Psychotherapy

For athletes experiencing common mental health issues, such as anxiety, mild depression, anger, and sports-related adjustment difficulties, talk therapy, also known as psychotherapy, is often considered the primary treatment approach. During these sessions,

therapists may address various topics related to athletes, including motivation, career changes, self-identity, sexual orientation, excessive training, and exhaustion. Psychotherapists employ different techniques, such as cognitive behavior therapy and motivational enhancement therapy, to help athletes overcome their mental health challenges.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) assists individuals in recognizing the interconnectedness of their thoughts, emotions, and actions. Mental health experts employ various techniques to help patients recognize and alter detrimental thought patterns, enhance their understanding of their own conduct and that of others, and cultivate problem-solving abilities.

Practitioners may utilize CBT to support athletes in establishing their objectives, maintaining concentration, managing stress, and enhancing their leadership capabilities. Athletes might find CBT particularly beneficial due to its emphasis on organization, goal-setting, practice, and self-sufficiency, which often aligns with their existing mindset.

CBT is frequently used
to treat

- Substance use disorders
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Depression
- Chronic pain
- Stress

Motivational Enhancement Therapy

Motivational enhancement therapy (MET) aims to tackle patients' reluctance towards essential lifestyle changes and guide them towards adopting healthier behaviors. Healthcare professionals facilitate this process by employing various techniques, including posing open-ended inquiries, validating constructive insights, engaging in

active listening, and recapitulating athletes' perspectives.

MET are often used to treat

- Substance addiction
- Tobacco cessation
- Medication adherence

Psychodynamic Therapy

Psychodynamic therapy aims to reveal the core of emotional distress. Sports professionals can benefit from mental health experts, who help them identify links between their past experiences and current cognitive patterns, actions, and interpersonal dynamics.

The therapeutic alliance in psychodynamic therapy serves as a model through which athletes can gain insight into their other relationships and life events. This self-discovery process enables athletes to mitigate their psychological symptoms and develop resilience to handle the demands of their sporting pursuits.

Psychodynamic therapy is helpful in a range of conditions, including

- Anxiety
- Panic
- Depression
- Stress-related physical ailments

Medication

Depending on the specific condition and drug type, medications can serve various purposes, such as stabilizing mood, alleviating stress, enhancing focus, and facilitating regular sleep patterns. For athletes, as in the general population, an optimal treatment approach may incorporate both psychotherapy and pharmacological interventions.

However, athletes face unique challenges regarding medication use. The anti-doping rules of sports organizations can be compromised by certain prescription drugs. Additionally, medications may induce adverse effects, such as increased body weight, muscular tremors, or drowsiness, which can negatively affect athletic performance. Healthcare providers should adhere to established guidelines when prescribing medication to athletes. It is crucial for prescribers to collaborate closely with athletes to carefully

oversee medication regimens and minimize potential side effects.

Group Therapy

In addition to individual psychotherapy and medication, group therapy is frequently recommended. Team sports athletes may find group therapy particularly appealing because of its familiar structure, which resembles the dynamics of a sports team with a coach leading a group of players.

Couples/ Family Therapy

Mental health experts can assist athletes and their families in comprehending how domestic life influences their athletic performance. Additionally, these professionals can guide athletes and their loved ones to recognize the effects of mental health issues on family dynamics. For both elite and recreational athletes, intense focus on their sports may become all-consuming, potentially jeopardizing relationships with spouses, children, and other family members. Through family counseling, athletes and their loved ones can identify behavioral patterns, establish priorities that enhance relationship well-being, and strike a harmonious balance between sports pursuits and family commitments.

Destigmatizing Athlete Mental Health

Establishing a strong support network within sports communities is crucial for tackling mental health issues. Efforts to reduce stigma must be extensive, to motivate individuals to seek assistance without fear of repercussions.

It is imperative for trainers and relatives to dispel the misconception that requesting help indicates a weakness. Athletes who feel backed by their community are more inclined to seek support. Mental distress should not be expected to endure more than physical injuries. Performance psychology has become an invaluable asset in athletic training, as it enhances both on-field performance and the positive mental attributes required for success.

Despite progress in recognizing the mental health concerns of athletes, obstacles remain. Sports organizations must actively foster an atmosphere of understanding and assistance. Conducting regular mental wellness assessments with team members can help eliminate the barriers that prevent individuals from obtaining help. The ultimate aim of athlete mental health initiatives is to cultivate an environment in which athletes can excel, both physically and psychologically.

References:

1. American Psychiatric Association, Bhattacharya, P., & Singh, R. (2022). "The Impact of Anxiety on Athletic Performance: A Review *Journal of Sports Psychology*. (2023). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.). 2, 45(3), 123–137.
2. *Athlete mental health: Everything you need to know*. Mc. Lean Hospital.
3. Gonser, S. (2020). What athletes should know about post-injury depression. Available at What athletes should know about post-injury depression—LRT sports—College Athletic news and exclusive coach ratings. (*lrt-sports.com*) Retrieved 25/1/2022.
4. Gupta, A. (2021). Mental health challenges in women's sports. *International Journal of Sports Science*, 38(4), 87–98.
5. Mental Health Foundation. (2015). *How to look after your mental health using Exercise* [Online]. Available at How to look after your mental health using exercise [Mental Health Foundation Retrieved 24/1/2022.
6. Mind. (2022). Performance matters: Mental health in elite Sport. Available at mental-health-and-elite-sport.pdf. (*mind.org.uk*) Retrieved 25/1/2022.
7. <https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-policy-work/sport-physical-activity-and-mental-health/>
8. NHS.<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/nhs-voluntary-charity-services/nhs-services/how-to-access-mental-health-services/>
9. Patel, K., & Sharma, M. (2020). Behavioral disorders and their effect on team dynamics. *Asian Journal of Sports Medicine*, 12(2), 45–56.
10. Peirce, N., Lester, C., Seth, A., & Turner, P. (2018). The Role of Physical Activity and Sport in Mental Health [Online]. Available at The Role of Physical Activity and Sport in Mental Health. (*fsem.ac.uk*). The Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine Retrieved 24/1/2022.
11. Reardon, C. (2019). Mental Health in elite athletes: International Olympic Committee consensus statement. Available at Mental health in elite athletes: International Olympic Committee consensus statement (2019). (*bmj.com*) Retrieved 24/1/2022.
12. Singh, S. (2019). *The role of sports psychologists in enhancing team performance*.
13. *Indian Journal of Physical Education*, 26 (1), 9-15.

14. Sport, B. B. C. (2021). *Simone Biles says “I have to focus on my mental health” after pulling out of team final*. Available at *Simone Biles says “I have to focus on my mental health” after pulling out of team final—BBC Sport* Retrieved 24/1/2022.
15. State of Mind. (2022) *What we do*. Available at <https://stateofmindsport.org/what-we-do/> (Accessed: 25/01/2022).
16. *Time To Change*. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/mental-health-and-stigma/help-and-support>
17. Kumar, S. (2025). Dance Therapy as a Multisensory Stimulation Approach for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). *Edumania-An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 03(01), 145–154. <https://doi.org/10.59231/edumania/9102>
18. Kumar, S., & Simran, S. (2024). Psychological impact of physical distancing due to covid 19 pandemic on school and higher education students. *Edumania-An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 02(04), 101–112. <https://doi.org/10.59231/edumania/9076>